

Seattle Waterfront Partners Group

Meeting

October 14, 2005

Attendees

Waterfront Partners Group Members

Carol	Binder	Pike Place Market PDA
Mahlon	Clements	Seattle Planning Commission
Sydney	Dobson	Seattle Architectural Foundation
Ardis	Dumett	Office of Senator Patty Murray
Lorna	Jordan	Lorna Jordan Studio
Tim	King	WA State Ferries/Colman Dock
Wolfgang	Loera	ILWU Local 19
Denny	Onslow	Downtown Seattle Association / Harbor Properties
Heather	Trim	People for Puget Sound
Carol	Tobin	Historic Preservation Community
David	Spiker	Seattle Design Commission
Catherine	Stanford	Downtown District Council
Judith	Whetzel	Triangle property owners
Philip	Wohlstetter	Allied Arts
David	Yeaworth	Allied Arts

Guests

Randal	Bennett	LMN Architects
Jim	Cade	LMN Architects
Toby	Crittenden	EnviroIssues
Heidi	Curtiss	University of Washington
Lance	Farber	Citizen
Joe	Follansbee	AKCHO
Kate	Joncas	Downtown Seattle Association
Karen	Klett	AKCHO
Kathy	Stallings	LMN Architects
Meriwether	Wilson	University of Washington

City Staff

B.J.	Brooks	DPR
Paul	Chasan	DPD/ CityDesign
Richard	Gelb	OSE
Joyce	Kling	SDOT
Kathy	Lueckert	DPD
Bernie	Matsuno	DON
Steve	Moddemeyer	DPD
Steve	Pearce	SDOT
John	Rahaim	DPD
Guillermo	Romano	DPD
Robert	Scully	DPD
Dianne	Sugimura	DPD
Anne	Sutphin	SDOT

Review Meeting Minutes from September 9th (5 Minutes)

There were no comments on the minutes from last month's meeting

Feedback on Colman Dock (About 30 Minutes)

Due to time constraints at the September meeting, there was limited time for comment on Tim King's presentation on the Washington State Ferries (WSF) Colman Dock expansion project. Tim presented a scale model of the two alternatives being studied. Afterwards, the WPG members were able to comment on the WSF's work to date. Key concerns that surfaced were issues pertaining to: Transportation options especially a reservation system and the viability and nature of proposed retail space.

Interactive model by Tim King

- Model can show two alternatives: 1) Bare Minimum, 2) Full Build-out
- **Bare Minimum** = Larger terminal with expanded pedestrian and car space. Facility would look similar to what exists today.
- **Full Build-out** = Larger Buildings, decked parking, mixed use, public open space, etc...

Feedback

John Rahaim summarized the key issues as he sees them that apply to this project:

- Wider range of uses
- Taller and larger buildings
- Views
- Code amendments to allow taller buildings

General consensus is that mixing of uses is good.

Note: *The following questions, answers and comments refer to the Full Build out alternative unless otherwise noted*

Question: How is traffic management changed?

Answer: Move entrance under Jackson St. Cars will queue under the buildings. The goal is to link connections (transportation and others) to downtown.

Ferry is looking at a reservation system, though a reservation system may not make for a smaller dock

WSF is looking at bikes and pedestrians

WSF model looks at the foot print of the existing dock plus that of Pier 48

Question/Comment:

- Is the retail going to be Northgate or Pike Place Market?
- Don't run from being very ambitious architecturally on the waterfront, *i.e.*, don't be afraid to create a signature building.

Answer/Response:

Open Space:

- Lots of open space on street edge
- Transparent building allows views to the harbor
- Trying to create a harbor in the former Pier 48 area
- Potential for passenger only ferries in Pier 48
- The ground plane will extend from the street, over the parking structure on the pier.
The roof of the parking structure will double as open space.

Question: Fill or pilings?

Answer: Pilings, fill is politically difficult

Comment: Cars vs. People

- The city is trying to be more livable
- Consider other transportation solutions. Eg., Kiss and Ride, reservation system

Response: WSF is looking at a reservation system. There are potential issues:

- Reservation system may encourage island passengers to drive more if it is convenient
- There are also equity issues around treating people more fairly

Comment: Programming is a key issues, reservation is a subset issue

Maybe only apply reservation on peak days (summer tourist season)

Reservations have worked in other places

Response: Most reservation systems are not commuter based.

Question: How viable is so much commercial space? Are ferry customers going to shop?
What about downtown residents?

Response: We feel that a mix of activities is key to the success of future retail at Colman Dock.

Question: Concern over the either/or nature of the proposals

Answer: The reason for the co-development is to boost revenues to offset rising costs.
That in turn, creates opportunities. All co-development is funded by the private sector.

Clarification by John Rahaim:

There are serious concerns about the level, scale and range of uses of proposed development. Especially, there are concerns about the precedent Colman dock would set regarding development over the waterfront.

Eg, hotels over waterfront are not currently permitted.

Response: People tend to respond negatively to development that excludes them. Make sure that retail and hotel are not only for tourists.

Question: Is WSF seeking proposals for programming?

Answer: Not yet.

Construction schedule is set for 2009. There is a direct overlap with the viaduct project. This creates both issues and opportunities.

Question: What community feedback have you solicited? Have you asked people: What do you want to see downtown?

Answer: WSF has done some initial marketing studies. There will be a full community process.

Conflicts (About 30 Mins)

John Rahaim led a discussion on potential conflicts that were likely to arise during the waterfront planning process (see attached document). Due to time constraints, the conversation was curtailed and integrated into the discussion of the next item on the agenda, the discussion of the draft concept plan.

Discussion w/ John Rahaim:

Since the beginning of the planning process, the city has sought to be clear about conflicts on the waterfront.

Conflict 1: *Public access to the waterfront edge vs. industrial uses*

Resolution: *Terminal 46 will remain a container facility, maximize public access to the north of Terminal 46.*

Comment: Port of Seattle wants to be a good neighbor.

Question: Is it still possible to capture the north edge of Terminal 46 to allow public access?

Comment: Edge is 50' wide, staff is open to the idea, edge is currently used but not for large container vessels

Question: Is Port open to giving 100-200 feet in exchange for some other land somewhere else?

Answer: Yes, maybe for a community center for the residents of Pioneer Square, or light maritime industrial use or perhaps a grocery store.

Conflict 2: *Public Access to the waterfront in light of heightened security at certain shoreline facilities especially in post 911 era. We need public access, and political landscape is in a constant state of flux.*

Resolution: *Seek to allow public access wherever possible while staying involved with entities responsible for developing and enforcing security measures.*

Comment: The upper rooftop of Pier 66 is now closed to the public when cruise ships are docked at the terminal.

Conflict 3: *Scale—the large scale of streetscapes necessary to accommodate vehicle-related uses such as the ferries*

Resolution: *The idea is to have a variety of spaces that capture scales on the waterfront.*

Conflict 4: *Pedestrians vs. Freight*

Resolution: *The surface street will be narrowest between Colman Dock and Pier 66 (cruise ships). In front of those facilities, the street will widen.*

Comment: Alaskan Way street right of way needs to be available for trucks that can't use the tunnel: oversized vehicles and those carrying hazardous materials.

Comment: The City is planning bike lanes along Alaskan Way

Conflict 5: *Cruise ships: Economic Benefit vs. Pollution*

Resolution: *No changes to the existing cruise ship areas.*

Question: Is there an opportunity to change the loading mechanism/system for the cruise ships?

Answer: The ships need to accommodate huge trucking needs in a short window of time.

Comment: Rather than say “No Changes,” keep the option of adding capacity and improving pedestrian access.

Conflict 6: *Environmental Issues vs. Historic Status of Piers*

Resolution: *Staff will develop guidelines detailing how piers can be redeveloped*

There was a fair amount of discussion on this issue

Clarification: This affects Piers 54-59, which are located in the central waterfront

Clarification: Controls and incentives to be adopted within each sub district:

Comment: Facades may not be historic

Issue/Comment: Concern that the piers are primarily used by tourists

Resolution: There is an opportunity to allow for a broader range of uses on the piers, which from a policy standpoint, would involve the City expanding the range of permitted uses.

Issue/Comment: Several members of the group were disheartened that the option of reorienting the piers is no longer on the table. Some members felt that the oblique configuration of the piers blocks access to the water and had especially dire impacts on views as well as discouraging pedestrians from exploring the western edges of the piers.

Response: From the City's perspective, the piers' orientation contributes to their historical character. That in mind, the proposed guidelines seek to address the above issues through their approach to built structures on the piers. For example, there may be opportunities to enhance the transparency of buildings built on top of piers. The city recommends studying how façade improvements, new uses and views can enhance people's experience on the piers by working *within* the current pier footprint.

Comment: There was a request that the City develop plans for what should happen in the event that the piers deteriorate beyond the point of repair.

Response: This may send mixed messages. In designating the piers as historic, the City is effectually saying that it intends to repair them.

Comment: Several piers are now used for parking. This is not the highest and best use of these properties.

Comment: The flavor of the shops feels touristy.

Comment: How can pedestrians be encouraged to venture into the piers?

Response (John Rahaim): The City's new development guidelines for the piers will allow for other uses.

At this point John Rahaim tabled discussion on Conflicts due to time constraints and because the next item on the agenda—discussion of the Draft Waterfront Concept Plan—would provide opportunities to discuss the remaining conflicts.

Draft Waterfront Concept Plan (About 45 Minutes)

Guillermo Romano of CityDesign presented a PowerPoint summarizing The City's recently completed Draft Waterfront Concept plan. After the presentation WPG members were able to comment on the document. The images referenced below correspond to the maps in the Draft Waterfront Concept Plan which was circulated at the meeting.

Presentation on the City's Draft Waterfront Concept Plan

Introduction: Key Points

- This plan is the result of a long history of public process
- Three council resolutions
- 7 principles (See current exhibit in the lobby of the Seattle Municipal Tower)
- This document is not a master plan but rather is intended to guide design and future framework of the waterfront.
- Its divided into nine layers

- *Thematic Concept: History & Movement*
- *Public Spaces*
- *Shoreline & Aquatic Habitat*
- *Upland & Sustainable Design*
- *Pedestrian Connections*
- *Transit & Vehicular Connections*
- *Alaskan Way Surface Street*
- *Potential Regulatory Changes*
- *Comprehensive Plan Updates*
- *Development Opportunities*
- *Special Design Elements*
- *Area-Specific Recommendations*

1) Thematic Concepts: History and Movement:

The slide showed a map that detailed existing special places and potential special places with an emphasis on open space.

2) Public Spaces:

- The plan suggests how existing spaces might be improved.
- The plan also identifies three major open spaces:
 - *Myrtle Edwards Park and the new Olympic Sculpture Park*
 - *Pike Place Market and the Aquarium*
 - *Colman Dock, Pier 48, and possibly the north edge of T-46*
- Public space is proposed for a lid covering the Alaskan Way Viaduct ramp to the Battery Street tunnel.
- Smaller public spaces are proposed elsewhere on the waterfront.

3) Habitat and Sustainability

Lots of potential for water features and stormwater features

- Water harvesting
- Victor Steinbrueck Park
- Olympic Sculpture Park
- Sea wall edge
- Green Streets and other key east/west streets

4) Pedestrian Connections

- Green Streets
- Other streets that play primary roles on the waterfront
- Transit streets
- Blue Ring
- Promenade
- Bike trails

5) Transit and Vehicular Connections

- Rail
- Ferry

- Water taxi
- Vehicular access
- Parking

6) Alaskan Way Street Surface

7) Special Design Elements

Unique design opportunities for example leaving a viaduct remnant

8) Regulatory Changes

9) Next Steps

Discussion

John Rahaim walked through the ecological recommendations individually and the floor was open for comments and discussion.

***Note:** The following discussion referred to language in a handout circulated at the meeting that summarized conflicts which that the plan sought to address titled “Seattle Central Waterfront: Potential Conflicts in Future Redevelopment (See previous agenda item).*

The question specifically referred to item number seven on that sheet which sought to highlight the conflict between: the economic will to replace the viaduct and its capacity and the community’s desire to soften the waters edge to improve habitat. The document stated the city’s resolution as:

“Maintain shape and location of seawall, but design waterside façade to provide habitat protection”

A concern was stated that the language precluded anything but a vertical wall along the waters edge. They hoped the wall could be set back to allow a softer edge for salmon habitat.

*Part of the conflict appeared to stem from a misunderstanding about the Potential Conflicts document. The language in the document is **not** the language in the plan but rather a summary of conflicts identified early in the planning process. City staff had intended to convey that the seawall location is mostly fixed. The seawall will have to be vertical as necessitated by its doubling as a tunnel wall. However, there is room for experimentation in the treatment of the western side of the wall (the water side). For example, along the central waterfront, where the tunnel wall doubles as the seawall, habitat shelves may be an appropriate design solution.*

Question: Is there an opportunity to kink the sea wall back to create a softer edge? The language says the seawall must be vertical.

Answer: Where the tunnel wall is a sea wall, it is vertical. The other side can have things (e.g. salmon shelves) attached to it. The ecology team is studying ways to enhance habitat along the sea wall.

Comment: North of the Aquarium, the sea wall provides maritime usability.

Lots of comments followed about the language about the “shape and location of the seawall” (see above)

Resolution: Clarify the language to allow for creative design and innovative technologies. The location of the sea wall is fixed, but its shape, especially outside the tunnel, is not.

Comment: Have someone read the plan who knows nothing about ecology and planning. There is a lot of obtuse language and jargon in the document. This will make reading the plan more user-friendly.

Summary of Comments: *There was a spirited discussion on the historical value of the piers. Some felt the piers’ historical value was overstated while others found them extremely valuable. Enlightenment philosophers were invoked by both sides to argue their case. Some favored realigning, or moving the piers.*

There was also discussion that the design review process as currently structured does not currently have the purview to adequately review the kind of development planned for the waterfront.

Resolution:

- Piers are historic
- The city should establish a special review district to the edge of Colman Dock to address the tunnel portal (Warm Response)

Comment: People appreciated the inclusion of tribal culture in the historical analysis.

John Rahaim summarized the comments on the Draft Waterfront Concept Plan

Two needs for further refinement/development:

- Language about the seawall shape
- Discussion of the piers to allow for history, views urban interactivity and environment
 - Do the historic piers exist when they are seen as a group or as individual entities?

Comment: Develop for locals and tourists will come. Eg, Pike Place Market

Comment: No mention of boats. Can we get boats on the waterfront?

Meeting Adjourned